

South Grand Prairie has enlisted the entire community in this effort. They have formed partnerships with local middle schools and area colleges. An Academic Advisory Board comprised of students, teachers, and prominent local business and industry leaders, has been formed to develop a curriculum and assessments of the program. And the Chamber of Commerce participates in a teacher-shadowing program which allows educators to understand the skills needed in the vocational areas in which they are teaching.

The results of this innovative program have been remarkable. South Grand Prairie has raised its students' passage rate on Texas' state math exam by 18 percent. South Grand Prairie students pass the state's reading test at a 24 percent higher rate than the state average, and the school has higher SAT scores and rates of college enrollment than the state's average.

Clearly, South Grand Prairie's academic reforms have been a success, the school is highly deserving of the New American High School award. If South Grand Prairie represents the future in American education, the future looks bright indeed. Congratulations to Principal Roy Garcia and all of South Grand Prairie's students, faculty, and parents. Your school is a model for all of America's high schools and you have made North Texas proud. I am pleased to be able to join South Grand Prairie officials at their White House award ceremony this Friday.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 5TH ANNUAL COVENANT HOUSE WASHINGTON CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Covenant House Candlelight Vigil, where I will speak on Tuesday, December 4, 1999. The Vigil is a national event held every year in early December in some 20 cities across the country. The Candlelight Vigil symbolizes community hope for the well being of all our children and highlights the plight of homeless, runaway, and at-risk children.

The Vigil in Washington alone has 3,000 concerned adults and youth marching, bearing candles and flashlights in support of youth. They will march shoulder to shoulder for a quarter of a mile to the Covenant House Washington Community Service Center, setting a tone of joy, solidarity, commitment, and hope. Similar rallies are held simultaneously at Covenant House sites across the country.

Since its inception in 1995, Covenant House Washington has invested over \$13 million of private funding in our youth. They have given hundreds of youth a hand up by providing food, shelter, tutoring, life skills, job training, legal representation, and positive recreational opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring Covenant House Washington and their commitment to our most vulnerable young people and in recognizing the 1999 Covenant House Washington Candlelight Vigil.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING THE WORK OF MIKE WOODS

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 17, 1999

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mike Woods and his more than 25 years of work as city clerk for the town of Smyrna, Tennessee. Mike's tenure will soon come to an end. He has decided to retire on November 30.

As clerk, Mike has seen Smyrna grow from a small community with an annual budget of \$500,000 dollars and 27 employees to being one of Tennessee's fastest growing cities with a population of more than 20,000, a current budget of more than \$25 million dollars and over 300 employees.

Mike worked hard, along with former Mayor Sam Ridley, to make Smyrna the home of Nissan Motor Manufacturing U.S.A., which has almost 6,000 workers. His vision and invaluable experience have served Smyrna well, and the city has been recognized with numerous state and national awards. Mike truly exemplifies the best of public service and will be sorely missed in city government.

I have known Mike since he first began his tenure in Smyrna and consider him a close friend. He has given me lots of good advice over the years, and I thank him for that. I congratulate Mike for his admirable and distinguished career and wish him the best of luck in future endeavors.

SENSE OF HOUSE REGARDING DIABETES

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL F. HILLIARD

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call for increased congressional spending to continue the research now progressing to seek a cure for diabetes. This devastating disease affects every family in America—my own brother is a victim of diabetes. The results of the disease are too numerous to count, but include blindness, loss of limbs, even shock resulting at times in death. At this time in our history, the incidence of diabetes in our population appears to be increasing.

We have made many strides in the treatment of diabetes, but much more needs to be done. It is very possible that in the near future we will be able to regenerate damaged beta cells in the pancreas, the cells which normally produce insulin. Alternatively, we may soon be able to generate new beta cells; in either case, it appears we will actually be able to cure the disease.

At this point in the process, we need to make an absolute commitment to this struggle to end this devastating disease. I commit myself and my vote to increasing spending on diabetes to an amount which will be sufficient for our scientists to accomplish this high goal.

November 18, 1999

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING WALTER PAYTON AND EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES OF THE HOUSE TO HIS FAMILY ON HIS DEATH

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 16, 1999

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to strongly support this measure that recognizes a true sports hero and legend, Walter Payton.

Payton died of bile duct cancer at age 45. He is survived by his wife, Connie; his daughter, Brittney; and his son, Jarrett.

But it is not his death that lingers in our minds. It is his way of life that fills our memories and our hearts.

As a member of the Chicago Bears, Walter Payton stretched athleticism past the bounds of our imaginations. He bulled and wove throughout the football field with a creativity that allowed brute force and artistic expression to merge into one perfect moment.

Payton, the National Football League's leader in yards rushing (16,726) and carries (3,838), was known for his durability. He missed just one game in his 13-year career with the Bears. And during that time, he earned a Super Bowl ring. Payton retired after the 1987 season, and the Bears retired his No. 34. In the first year he was eligible for the Pro Football Hall of Fame, he was a unanimous selection.

But we cannot limit his worth to mere statistics and on-the-field achievement. Walter Payton represented sheer perseverance. Some would call Walter Payton the Cal Ripken of football. I would suggest that Cal Ripken is the Walter Payton of baseball. Indeed, Payton is the very embodiment of the term, "iron will."

His commitment to excellence and immense endurance makes his death seem all the more unbelievable. But Walter Payton did not lose his battle with liver disease. He simply ran out of time.

During an emotional, invitation-only memorial service that drew about 1,200 people, friends and family remembered Payton's practical jokes, his passion for those around him, his determination to be the best at what he did, and his generosity.

The public also had its chance to say goodbye during a ceremony at Soldier Field. Thousands of Bears fans filed into the stadium, many carrying signs in tribute and others dressed in Payton's familiar No. 34 jersey.

Yet, sports aficionados are not the only members of society who claim Payton as their hero. Any American, regardless of race or gender, can identify with Walter Payton. The consummate statesman, Payton carried himself on and off the field with dignity and class. He achieved, yet, he always remained committed to his team—individuality was not his style. It is because of his gentle and caring demeanor that he truly earned his nickname, "Sweetness." He was as sweet a person in real life as he was to watch on the football field.